

Amendments to the Claims

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. 1. 2. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 4 34 wherein step (ab) comprises (a1b1) receiving a plurality of item category selections from the customer, each item category representing an area of potential interest to the customer; (a2b2) displaying information identifying a plurality of sample preference items representing subclasses in each category; and (a3b3) selecting sample preference items based on information received from the customer.
1. 3. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 2 wherein step (a3b3) comprises receiving a rating from the customer for each displayed sample preference item and selecting sample preference items based on the received rating.
1. 4. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 4 34 wherein the consumer preference test is conducted before a live audience.
1. 5. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 4 34 wherein the consumer preference test is conducted individually respondent by respondent with a plurality of respondents and each respondent rates each of a plurality of preference items.
6. (Canceled).

1 7. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 6 34 wherein the distances are scaled
2 to fall within a predetermined range.

1 8. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 4 34 wherein step (ed) comprises
2 displaying the recommended items to the customer under control of the
3 processor.

1 9. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 4 34 wherein step (ab) comprises
2 generating information identifying a plurality of profile sample items based on
3 selections made by a customer and on information identifying items
4 recommended in step (ed).

1 10. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 4 34 wherein step(ab) further
2 comprises generating information identifying a plurality of profile sample items by
3 displaying information identifying items recommended in step (ed) to a customer,
4 receiving a rating from the customer for each displayed item and using the
5 received ratings to generate the information identifying a plurality of profile
6 sample items.

1 11. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 4 34 wherein the preference items are
2 songs.

1 12. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 4 34 wherein the preference items are
2 movies.

1 13. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 4 34 wherein the preference items are
2 television shows.

1 14. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 4 34 wherein the preference items are
2 books.

1 15. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 4 34 wherein the preference items are
2 fashions.

16. (Cancelled).

1 17. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 16 35 wherein the profile generator
2 comprises:

3 a category generator that receives a plurality of item category selections
4 from the customer, each item category representing an area of potential interest
5 to the customer;

6 a sample profile item generator that displays information identifying a
7 plurality of sample preference items representing subclasses in each category;
8 and

9 an item thresholding unit that selects sample preference items based on
10 information received from the customer.

1 18. (Original) The apparatus of claim 17 wherein the sample item profile generator
2 comprises an input mechanism for receiving a rating from the customer for each
3 displayed sample preference item and the item thresholding unit selects sample
4 preference items based on the received ratings.

1 19. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 16 35 wherein the consumer
2 preference test is conducted before a live audience.

1 20. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 16 35 wherein the consumer
2 preference test is conducted individually respondent by respondent with a
3 plurality of respondents and each respondent rates each of a plurality of
4 preference items.

21. (Canceled).

1 22. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 21 36 wherein the distances are
2 scaled to fall within a predetermined range.

1 23. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 16 36 wherein the recommendation
2 presentation unit comprises a display that displays the recommended items to
3 the customer.

1 24. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 16 36 wherein the profile generator
2 generates information identifying a plurality of profile sample items based on
3 selections made by a customer and on information identifying recommended
4 items calculated by the recommendation unit.

1 25. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 16 36 wherein the profile generator
2 comprises a display that displays recommendations generated by the
3 recommendation unit to a customer, an input mechanism that receives a rating
4 from the customer for each displayed item and the item thresholding unit selects
5 sample preference items using the received ratings.

1 26. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 16 36 wherein the preference items
2 are songs.

1 27. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 16 36 wherein the preference items
2 are movies.

1 28. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 16 36 wherein the preference items
2 are television shows.

1 29. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 16 36 wherein the preference items
2 are books.

1 30. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 16 36 wherein the preference items
2 are fashions.

31.-32. (Canceled).

33. (Currently Amended) The computer program product of claim 32 36 wherein the consumer preference test is conducted with a plurality of respondents and each respondent rates each of a plurality of preference items ~~and wherein the program code for generating the database information comprises program code for calculating a distance in the database between a pair of preference items by calculating the difference in preference ratings between the pair of preference items for each respondent and combining the preference rating differences for all respondents.~~

1 34. (New) A computer-implemented method for use in a computer having a
2 processor and a memory for generating recommendations for consumer
3 preference items, comprising:
4 (a) creating and maintaining a database in the memory that stores information
5 identifying a plurality of preference items and distances between each pair
6 of items, wherein each distance in the database is calculated by first
7 calculating the difference in preference ratings obtained from a respondent
8 in consumer preference test for that pair of preference items and
9 combining calculated preference rating differences for all respondents in
10 the consumer preference test;
11 (b) generating information identifying a plurality of profile sample items in the
12 database based on selections made by a customer;

- (c) controlling the processor to scan the database and to select consumer preference items wherein the stored distance between each profile sample item and a selected consumer preference item is less than or equal to a predetermined fixed distance; and
- (d) presenting the selected consumer preference items to the customer as a recommendation.

35. (New) Apparatus for generating recommendations for consumer preference items, comprising:

a recommendation database in the memory that stores information identifying a plurality of preference items and distances between each pair of items, wherein each distance in the database is calculated by first calculating the difference in preference ratings obtained from a respondent in consumer preference test for that pair of preference items and combining calculated preference rating differences for all respondents in the consumer preference test;

a profile generator that generates information identifying a plurality of profile sample items based on selections made by a customer;

a recommendation unit that scans the database and selects consumer preference items wherein the stored distance between each profile sample item and a selected consumer preference item is less than or equal to a predetermined fixed distance; and

a presentation unit that presents the selected consumer preference items to the customer as a recommendation.

36. (New) A computer program product for generating recommendations for consumer preference items, the computer program product comprising a computer usable medium having computer readable program code thereon, including:

program code for creating and maintaining a database in the memory that stores information identifying a plurality of preference items and distances between each pair of items, wherein each distance in the database is calculated

8 by first calculating the difference in preference ratings obtained from a
9 respondent in consumer preference test for that pair of preference items and
10 combining calculated preference rating differences for all respondents in the
11 consumer preference test;

12 program code for generating information identifying a plurality of profile
13 sample items in the database based on selections made by a customer;

14 program code for controlling the processor to scan the database and to
15 select consumer preference items wherein the stored distance between each
16 profile sample item and a selected consumer preference item is less than or
17 equal to a predetermined fixed distance; and

18 program code for presenting the selected consumer preference items to
19 the customer as a recommendation.